What is claimed is:

1. A method for use in managing outgoing calls in a call center, comprising:

initiating a call to a first party from the call center via a communication medium;

5   monitoring said communication medium for signals received from a location associated with said first party after said step of initiating a call;

detecting an audible signal received from the first party location via said communication medium;

10   initiating processing of said audible signal in a call classifier to determine a characteristic of said audible signal; and

playing a prerecorded greeting during said call, said prerecorded greeting being played during a time period when

15   said call classifier is processing said audible signal.

2. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of playing a prerecorded greeting includes detecting a period of silence on said communication medium and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response

5   thereto.

3. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of initiating processing includes initiating processing that will analyze whether said audible signal was generated by a live party during the call.

11

4.   The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:

when said call classifier determines that said audible signal was generated by a live party at the first party location, establishing a talk path between the live party and an agent at the call center after playback of said prerecorded greeting has ended.

5.   The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:

when said call classifier determines that said audible signal was not generated by a live party at the first party location, terminating the call.

6.   The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said communication medium includes a local loop associated with a telephone network.

7.   The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of initiating a call includes dialing a telephone number associated with said first party.

8.   A method for use in managing an outgoing call comprising the steps of:

placing an outgoing call to a remote party location over a communication network;

processing a signal received from said remote party location during said call to determine a source type of said signal;

playing a prerecorded greeting to said remote party location during said step of processing; and

after said prerecorded greeting has ended, establishing a talk path between a local agent and the remote party location when it is determined that said signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call.

9. The method claimed in claim 8, further comprising the step of:

terminating the call when it is determined that said signal was not generated by a live party during the call.

10. The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of placing an outgoing call includes dialing a telephone number associated with a remote party.

11. The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said communication network includes a public switched telephone network.

12. The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of processing a signal includes using a call classifier to determine whether the signal was generated by a live party during the call.

13

13. The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of playing a prerecorded message includes detecting a period of silence after receipt of said signal and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response thereto.

14. The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of establishing a talk path includes passing control of said call to said local agent for a remainder of the call.

15. A system for use within a call center, comprising:

a call processing unit for use in placing a call to a remote party location via a communication network;

a call classifier unit for analyzing a signal received from said remote party location to determine whether said signal originated from a live party during the call;

a message playback unit for playing back a prerecorded message to said remote party location while said call classifier unit is analyzing said signal; and

a switch unit for establishing a talk path between a local agent position and said remote party location when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said signal originated from a live party during the call.

16. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

14

said message playback unit plays back said prerecorded message in response to detection of a period of silence during said call.

17. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said external communication network includes a public switched telephone network.

18. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said external communication network includes at least one of the following: a satellite communication network, an optical fiber communication network, a local area network, a

5 wide area network, a municipal area network, a private branch exchange network, an Internet network, and a terrestrial wireless network.

19. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call processing unit includes means for terminating said call when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said signal did not originate from a live party during

5 the call.

20. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call processing unit and said switch unit are implemented within a common digital processor.

21. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call processing unit and said message playback unit are implemented within a common digital processor.

22. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call classifier unit is part of a pool of call classifier units; and

said call processing unit includes means for assigning
5 call classifier units from said pool of call classifier units to individuals calls being supported by the call center.